

### Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claims 1-12 to read as follows.

1. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus that forms an image by ejecting ink from a print head, in which a plurality of ejecting portion rows are arranged, to a print medium, each of the ejecting portion rows having a plurality of ejecting portions arranged ~~in it~~ therein, the apparatus comprising:

a carriage that scans a the print head; and

preliminary ejecting means for ejecting the ink from ~~said~~ the ejecting portions in ~~said~~ the print head ~~so~~ such that the ejection is not involved in formation of ~~said~~ the image, and

wherein said preliminary ejecting means sequentially selects one of ~~said~~ the plurality of ejecting portion rows as ~~said~~ an ejecting portion on which an ejecting operation is performed, while said carriage is not performing a scanning operation, and said preliminary ejecting means then subjects the selected ejecting portion row to preliminary ejection.

2. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus that forms an image by ejecting ink from a print head, in which a plurality of ejecting portion rows are arranged, to a print medium, each of the ejecting portion rows having a plurality of ejecting portions arranged ~~in it~~ therein, the apparatus comprising:

~~(ejecting portion row arranging)~~ arranging means for arranging the plurality of ejecting portion rows at intervals of a predetermined distance set so that mists resulting from a preliminary ejecting operation performed on the plurality of ejecting portion rows do not reach a surface of the print head in which the plurality of ejecting portion rows are disposed.

3. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein ~~said~~ the predetermined distance between ~~said~~ the ejecting portion rows is 1.00 mm or less.

4. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus that forms an image by ejecting ink from a print head, in which a plurality of ejecting portion rows are arranged, to a print medium, each of the ejecting portion rows having a plurality of ejecting portions arranged ~~in it~~ therein, the apparatus comprising:

a carriage that scans a the print head; and

preliminary ejecting means for ejecting the ink from ~~said~~ the ejecting portions in said print head ~~so~~ such that the ejection is not involved in formation of ~~said~~ the image, and

wherein said preliminary ejecting means selects a set of plural adjacent ~~ones~~ rows of ~~said~~ the plurality of ejecting portion rows as ~~said~~ ejecting portions on which an ejecting operation is simultaneously performed, and switches the set to perform a preliminary ejecting operation for ~~said~~ the plurality of ejecting portion rows sequentially.

5. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said preliminary ejecting means performs a plurality of preliminary ejections using ~~said the~~ set of ejecting portion rows, and said preliminary ejecting means carries out preliminary ejection such that mists resulting from ink droplets ejected from ~~said the~~ set of ejecting portion rows and impacting a print medium, the mists moving toward a surface of the ejecting portion ~~surfaces~~ rows, are pushed back from ~~said the~~ surface of the ejecting portion ~~surface~~ rows by air currents resulting from a preliminary ejecting operation performed on a next row of ejecting portion rows, the air currents flowing in an ejecting direction.

6. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 4 1, wherein ~~said the~~ plurality of ejecting portion rows are provided for respective colors of ejected inks.

7. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the ~~comprising~~ a print head ~~including~~ includes a plurality of large ejecting portion rows in which large ejecting portions are arranged from which a relatively large amount of ink is ejected during one ejecting operation and a plurality of small ejecting portion rows in which small ejecting portions are arranged from which a relatively small amount of ink is ejected during one ejecting operation, and further comprising ~~preliminary ejecting means for ejecting the ink from said ejecting portions in said print head so that the ejection is not involved in formation of an image;~~ preliminary ejecting

control means for simultaneously performing a preliminary ejecting operation on said plurality of large ejecting portion rows, and for performing a preliminary ejecting operation on said plurality of small ejecting portion rows one by one.

8. (Currently amended) A ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 7, ~~wherein~~ 7, wherein said preliminary ejecting control means performs ~~said the~~ preliminary ejecting operation for small ejecting portion rows after performing ~~said the~~ preliminary ejecting operation for large ejecting portion rows.

9. (Currently amended) An ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 4 1, wherein ~~said the~~ ejecting portions use thermal energy to cause ink to generate bubbles, a pressure of which causes ink to be ejected as droplets.

10. (Currently amended) A preliminary ejecting method executed using an ink jet printing apparatus that forms an image by ejecting ink from a print head, in which a plurality of ejecting portion rows are arranged, to a print medium, each of the ejecting portion rows having a plurality of ejecting portions arranged ~~in it~~ therein, the ink being ejected from ~~said the~~ ejecting portions in ~~said the~~ print head ~~so~~ such that the ejection is not involved in formation of ~~said the~~ image, the method comprising:

a step of sequentially selecting one of ~~said the~~ plurality of ejecting portion rows as ~~said an~~ ejecting portion on which an ejecting operation is performed and then subjecting the selected ejecting portion row to preliminary ejection.

11. (Currently amended) A preliminary ejecting method executed using an ink jet printing apparatus that forms an image by ejecting ink from a print head, in which a plurality of ejecting portion rows are arranged, to a print medium, each of the ejecting portion rows having a plurality of ejecting portions arranged ~~in it~~ therein, the ink being ejected from ~~said the~~ ejecting portions in ~~said the~~ print head ~~so~~ such that the ejection is not involved in formation of ~~said the~~ image, the method comprising the step of:

selecting a set of plural adjacent ~~ones~~ rows of ~~said the~~ plurality of ejecting portion rows as ~~said~~ ejecting portions on which an ejecting operation is simultaneously performed, and switching the set to perform a preliminary ejecting operation ~~of said~~ for the plurality ~~for~~ of ejecting portion rows sequentially.

12. (Currently amended) A preliminary ejecting method executed using an ink jet printing apparatus that forms an image by ejecting ink from a print head including a plurality of large ejecting portion rows, in which large ejecting portions are arranged from which a relatively large amount of ink is ejected during one ejecting operation and a plurality of small ejecting portion rows in which small ejecting portions are arranged from which a relatively small amount of ink is ejected during one ejecting operation, to a print medium, the ink being ejected from ~~said the~~ ejecting portions in ~~said the~~ print head ~~so~~ such that the ejection is not involved in formation of ~~said the~~ image, the method comprising the ~~step~~ steps of:

if a preliminary ejecting operation relates to ~~said~~ the plurality of large ejecting portion rows, simultaneously performing a preliminary ejecting operation on ~~said~~ the plurality of large ejecting portion rows; and

if a preliminary ejecting operation relates to ~~said~~ the plurality of small ejecting portion rows, performing a preliminary ejecting operation on ~~said~~ the plurality of small ejecting portion rows one by one.